

Summer Carbonara with Green Asparagus and Pancetta

INGREDIENTS:

6 very fresh large egg yolks
1/4 cup heavy cream
2 cups freshly grated Parmesan cheese
Freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon olive oil
8 oz. pancetta, cut into small dice
1 pound dried gnocci
1/2 lb. asparagus, steamed and cut into 1 1/2 inch pieces
Sea salt

DIRECTIONS:

1. COMBINE THE EGG YOLKS, CREAM, AND 1 CUP OF THE PARMESAN IN A MIXING BOWL. SEASON WITH PEPPER AND SET ASIDE.
2. HEAT THE OIL IN A LARGE SAUTÉ PAN OVER MEDIUM HEAT. ADD THE PANCETTA AND FRY, TOSSING AND TURNING OCCASIONALLY, FOR ABOUT 6 MINUTES OR UNTIL VERY BROWN AND CRISP. USING A SLOTTED SPOON, REMOVE THE PANCETTA TO A DOUBLE LAYER OF PAPER TOWELS TO DRAIN. KEEP THE PAN AND OIL WARM.
3. COOK THE PASTA IN BOILING SALTED WATER ACCORDING TO PACKAGE DIRECTIONS FOR AL DENTE, TENDER BUT STILL SLIGHTLY CHEWY. DRAIN WELL, RESERVING ABOUT 1/2 CUP OF THE COOKING WATER.
4. PUT THE PASTA IN THE WARM SAUTÉ PAN AND BEGIN TOSSING AWAY FROM THE HEAT. ADD THE EGG MIXTURE, TOSSING CONSTANTLY. IF THE SAUCE SEEMS TOO THICK, ADD SOME OF THE PASTA COOKING WATER, A BIT AT A TIME. TOSS IN THE RESERVED PANCETTA AND ASPARAGUS. TASTE AND, IF NECESSARY, SEASON WITH SALT AND PEPPER.
5. SERVE IMMEDIATELY IN WARM PASTA BOWLS, PASSING THE REMAINING CHEESE ON THE SIDE.

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS